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DECORATIVE ART STUDY FOR WOMEN.

IN examining the studies and still life pictures painted by the girls in Packer Institute, Brooklyn, under direction of Prof. Percival de Luce, the visitors were struck by the power and freedom displayed, those qualities being in such notable contrast to the "pretty-pretty" and "sweetly-sweet" devices of young ladies who are left to draft their own designs or put in form their dainty imaginings. There was evidence in these studies of the power that is bestowed by knowledge and the facility that comes from confidence and practice. Their teacher had held them rigidly to facts and taught them to paint blue stone beer mugs before he permitted them to paint angels and cherubs and flowers, which is the true way to teach art.

But the question suggests itself whether it were not better, whether the artistic economies were not more truly served if the young damsels were instructed in art that had some direct bearing on domestic decoration. Not one young lady in fifty ever applies the art knowledge that she acquires in boarding school. After leaving school she commonly puts her crayons and colors and sketch books on a shelf, and there they stay until, perhaps, her children take them down to dabble in.

There is, however, in almost every woman a natural bent for home decoration. It may manifest itself in the culture of flowers for windows, in the affixing of small prints, chromos, and autumn leaves to the walls, but more commonly in the manufacture of such things as worsted and cotton "frills" for brackets and bureaus, and tidies for chairs.

Oh, the unutterable things that male creatures have thought, and sometimes said, about tidies! There is something that arouses the instinctive repugnance of almost every man in the carefully constructed yet awfully cheap looking arrangements with which it is not uncommon to find every chair and sofa in a house bedecorated. As a covering to a handsome chair the average tidy is as pleasing as a piece of tin foil on a gold coin, a bit of rag in the cup of a flower, or a plaster on the human countenance.

If the art studies of our young women were given a somewhat practical turn that should be designed not only to correct their taste but to en-



A DESIGN FOR A CARD.

Mountain Laurel. The leaves a glossy deep green, the blossoms light pink (white and rose madder) with red spots (madder lake) on the inner side of the corolla; the buds a vivid pink (rose madder and white); the stems deep red.



A DESIGN FOR A CARD.

Passion Flowers. Background, biscuit color, leaves a vivid green and brown, blossom white and lavender; deep purple in the darker circles; light greenish yellow in the stamens and pistils.

dow them with ability to utilize their taste and training to perceptible advantage, we should see fewer of these decorative abnormalities and more genuine, earnest, and capable work. Moreover, it may be surmised that art work of a decorative character would prove more agreeable to young ladies than the ordinary routine work of sketching in black and white and in color, things that are not of intrinsic beauty, and that it seems to many of them a waste of time to paint.

If, while they are held strictly to facts in drawing and color, they could be taught to apply those facts—to compose, arrange, and select—their work would assume a more direct and vital interest to them, and the results of it would endure longer and to better purpose. If only for the sake of exterminating tidies, let those who are to be our housekeepers be instructed in the commoner principles of applied art.

PAINTING DRESSES.—With all the marvelously varied patterns that weaving can introduce into textures and the delicate effects of embroidery, the desire for novelty has led to the revival abroad of the medieval practice of painting dresses, paint and needlework being blended. In the "Romaunt of the Rose," Chaucer thus describes the robe of the god of love:

But all in flouris and flourettes,
Ipaigned all with amorettes,
And with lozenges and scoochons (*escutcheons*),
With birdes, libardes (*leopards*), and lions,
And other beastes wrought ful wel.
His garments was every del
Ipurtraied, and ywrought with flouris,
By divers medeling of colours—

In this connection it is worth recalling that the Middle Age was the period of elaborately painted tapestries, in which, whilst the subordinate parts were woven, the heads and hands of the figures were left to the artist's brush. By a natural transition the painting of dresses became popular, particularly in the way of borders or mottoes.

BIRD ORNAMENTATION.—A pretty device to set off a small oil painting or water color drawing, is to have a graceful bird with bright plumage holding on to the upper portion of the frame by its beak and claws as if trying to get a footing.